

Understanding Culture Society and Politics

Quarter 2 – Module 5: New Challenges in Contemporary Societies



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Lesson

5

New Challenges in Contemporary Societies



What's In

Before we proceed, let us go back with some of the important concepts about society on social stratification and inequality which relate our discussion.

According to Marxist Theory, social stratification is created by the differing economic capacities among people and their relationships to the means or the factors of production. In a society, two distinct classes can be created which feature those who own the factors or means of production and those who sell their labor in the production chain to those who own the means. This basically creates the employer-employee relation in most societies. Apart from these two distinct groups, Karl Marx also recognized two other groups that do not belong to either but are somehow related to the two large groups:

- The Petite Bourgeoisie- those who own some of the means of productions but their profit earning power is not enough to earn them a position among the bourgeoisie
- The Underclass- includes those who have no social status

Social Stratification is a form of inequality that occurs due to the inherent differences between human beings and can be determined by race, gender, age, and economic capacity among other distinguishing features. The differentiation is done to mark one group as superior over another which leads to social classes arranged as hierarchies.

Let's have a drill!

Where do the following items belong? Is it (A) Bourgeoisie or (B) Underclass?

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1. _____ | Craftsmen | 6. _____ | Merchants |
| 2. _____ | Artisans | 7. _____ | Landlords |
| 3. _____ | Wage earners | 8. _____ | Car buyers |
| 4. _____ | Employer | 9. _____ | Company owners |
| 5. _____ | Beggars | 10. _____ | Employee |



What is It

In this part of your journey, we provide something for you to read to deepen your understanding about the topic. Please do it with comprehension to discover knowledge that will help you out in dealing with the next phase of your quest.

New Challenges Contemporary Societies: Human Adaptation and Social Change

*“As human beings we do change, grow, adapt,
perhaps even learn and become wiser.”*

- Wendy Carlos

A progressive society requires social change. However, there are challenges which we must overcome in order to ensure this. With the society's development comes a new challenge that everyone must face. Everyone must realize that responding to social, political, and cultural change has a great impact to the society.

Many of the changes that people have experienced throughout the history come with numerous challenges which must overcome. It is for this reason that people devised various ways of dealing with social, political, and cultural change through involvement and collective action. These actions are what we need in order to respond to the social, political, and cultural changes that are happening.

Social change, in anthropology and sociology, refers to the modification of mechanisms, means methods, or systems within the social structure, characterized by alterations in social relationships, social order social symbols, social organizations, value system, or rules of behaviour. Examples of social change include the industrial revolution, the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement and the women's suffrage movement, etc.

Cultural change could be seen in the practices, institutions, technology, societal laws, ethos or mores (moral norms), manners, value systems, customs, traditions, habits, beliefs, arts, music, and literatures. Some of the examples are changes in the manner of choosing a spouse and adopting a new lifestyle.

Political Change, on the other hand, denotes alterations in the governmental aspect of a society, such as changes in the administrative, executive, legislative, judicial, and constitutional processes, systems, and structures. Examples are constitutional amendments and the shift from presidential to parliamentary form of government.

Global Warming and Climate Change

Global warming is generally described as a gradual increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and its oceans. It is mainly caused heat being trapped in the earth known as greenhouse effect. This environmental change is irreversible, and later would permanently change the earth's climate. As such, climate change becomes a global concern to every nation, especially to those highly industrialized countries.



Greenhouse Gases and Greenhouse Effect

Greenhouse Effect is the process wherein radiation from the earth's atmosphere warms its surface to a temperature above what it would be in the absence of its atmosphere. It is caused by greenhouse gases.



Effects of Climate Change

1. Changes in rainfall patterns
2. Increase in surface temperature
3. Coastline Changes
4. Water level increases
5. Food productivity decreases
6. Depletion of forest cover
7. Desertification of lands

Ways to Address Global Warming

1. Current adaptation strategies

Humans must strategize in order to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We can adapt through minimizing our carbon emission and adopt a more environmental-friendly methods of living such as electric-based transportation. However, adaptation alone is not expected to be able to cope with environmental effects of climate change since some of the effects of global warming are irreversible already.

2. Vulnerability of populations to climate change

Human population is vulnerable to climate change caused by different factors such as pollution, conflicts, or epidemics. We can engage on sustainable development activities, such as reforestation, recycling and the use of renewable resources to help human societies reduce their vulnerability to climate change.

3. Mitigation and adaptation

Mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gases emission can help to avoid, reduce, or delay impacts of climate change to ensure that the adaptation capacity of people is maximize in its full efficiency.

International Agreements



United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

is an international environmental treaty adopted on 9 May 1992 and opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992

The UNFCCC objective is to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system"

The parties to the convention have met annually from 1995 in Conferences of the Parties (COP) to assess progress in dealing with climate change.

In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was concluded and established legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in the period 2008–2012.

In 2015 the Paris Agreement was adopted, governing emission reductions from 2020 on through commitments of countries in Nationally Determined Contributions, lowering the target to 1.5 °C.

Although the climate problem will not be solved without government responses, various private sectors such as business corporations, advocacy groups, and other non-governmental institutions are actively engaging to reduce the cause of climate problem specifically global warming.

Accordingly, the private sectors are particularly important because climate policy is shared responsibility between the public and private sectors of the society. The private sector responses also called as private climate governance can be collaborated with government responses.

Transnational Migration: Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)

Since the late 20th century, the rise of globalization has changed the concept of migration. Improvements in transportation, communication, and financial systems have made it easier for people to migrate to work in another country but still provide for their families in their home countries by sending their earning home.

Transnational Migration is a global phenomenon that is mounting scope, complexity and impact. Migration is both a cause and effect of broader development processes and an intrinsic feature of our globalizing world.

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)

Filipinos often have the mindset that when they work abroad, they would be able to support and sustain the needs of the families away from poverty.

Overseas Filipino Workers is a term often used to refer to Filipino migrant workers, people with Filipino citizenship who reside in another country for a limited period of employment. OFW Immigrants go to other countries because of poverty. These people migrate for economic purposes. Their primary goal is to earn much larger amount of salary to support their families in their home country.

The sacrifices of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) make just to provide a better life for their families earned them the title of the nation's *bagong bayani* (new heroes). In recent years, the improvement of the economy often attributed to their remittances further cemented their mark in the Philippines.



According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), there were a total of 1,844,406 OFWs in 2015 – 1,437,875 land-based and 406,531 sea-based.

Empowering OFWs

Overseas Filipino Workers' (OFWs) face a lot of challenges as they seek a better opportunity abroad. Because of difference in social and cultural structures of other countries, OFWs are prone to violence manifested through labor exploitation, abuse of employers, leading to some legal issues. Despite the difficulties faced by the OFWs, they are persistently pursuing to work abroad to lift their families from poverty. Other OFWs have chosen to work abroad for better salary, which the local employers could not provide them. Still, there are OFWs who are forced to work abroad due to underemployment caused by job mismatch in work opportunity and workers' skills in the country. Nonetheless, there are few non-governmental organizations that continuously provide support system to OFWs to protect their rights and assist them to fulfil their employment goals while working abroad.